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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the fifty-third session

Need to review General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 25 October 1971 owing to the fundamental change in the international situation and to the coexistence of two Governments across the Taiwan Strait

Letter dated 8 July 1998 from the representatives of Burkina Faso, El Salvador, the Gambia, Grenada, Liberia, Nicaragua, Sao Tome and Principe, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Swaziland and Solomon Islands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instruction of our respective Governments, we have the honour to request you, pursuant to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to include an item in the agenda of the fifty-third session of the Assembly entitled "Need to review General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 25 October 1971 owing to the fundamental change in the international situation and to the coexistence of two Governments across the Taiwan Strait". Pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we attach an explanatory memorandum (see annex I) and a draft resolution (see annex II).*

(*Signed*) Michel **Kafando**
Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Ricardo G. **Castaneda-Cornejo**
Permanent Representative of El Salvador
to the United Nations

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Permanent Representative of the Gambia
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Robert E. **Millette**
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(*Signed*) Famatta Rose **Osode**
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Permanent Representative of the Republic of Senegal
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Moses Mathendele **Dlamini**
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Swaziland
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(*Signed*) Rex Stephen **Horoi**
Permanent Representative of Solomon Islands
to the United Nations

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

1. Since the division of China almost half a century ago, two Governments have ruled over the two parts of China

The Republic of China, founded in 1912, was divided in 1949 as a result of civil war. In that same year, the People's Republic of China was established in Beijing, and the Government of the Republic of China moved to Taiwan. Since then, the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China have coexisted as two parts of China, with neither subject to the other's rule.

Over that half century, each side has developed its own political systems, social values and foreign relations, an exceptional situation in the international community. In these circumstances, the concept of "governmental succession" under traditional international law is not at all applicable to the case of the Republic of China.

2. Resolution 2758 (XXVI) adopted by the General Assembly in 1971 violates the spirit of the Universal Declar tion of Human Rights

The Republic of China, a charter Member of the United Nations, participated conscientiously in all the activities of the Organization from 1945 to 1971. However, in 1971, as a result of the adoption of resolution 2758 (XXVI) by the General Assembly, the Republic of China's seat in the United Nations was transferred to the People's Republic of China. That action had the effect of depriving the Government and the people of the Republic of China of their right to participate in the activities of the United Nations and related agencies, as well as in other important international organizations.

For example, the Republic of China is not allowed to participate in the World Bank or International Monetary Fund. During the recent East Asian financial crisis, it was therefore unable to work formally with neighbouring countries to attenuate the severity of the crisis. In the health field, an outbreak of enteroviral infection attacked children in Taiwan in May and June of this year, resulting in 52 deaths and hundreds of cases of severe complications. Because it is not a member of the World Health Organization, another result of resolution 2758 (XXVI), the people of the Republic of China were left alone to fight against the virus.

The United Nations, as the focal organization for global involvement in virtually every field, including the environment, disarmament, international law, drug control, human settlements, sustainable development and the protection of human rights, requires the participation and cooperation of all nations in order to provide sound and universally beneficial solutions. The United Nations is the forum where the opinions of world citizens are voiced and policies developed. However, the voice of the people of the Republic of China is not heard.

This denial of these rights violates the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, which advocates that "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration ... Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs".

3. The Republic of China meets all requirements for membership in the United Nations

The Republic of China has a defined territory, a population of 21.8 million (greater than that of two thirds of the Members of the United Nations), and a Government which has the capacity to fulfil international obligations. It therefore meets all prerequisites for statehood.

In addition, the Republic of China on Taiwan is a strong global economic power. The following statistics speak for themselves: twentieth largest economy in terms of gross national product, at over $285 billion; fourteenth most important trading nation; a prime global investor and the second largest investor in East Asia; one of the top holders of foreign exchange reserves; and a per capita gross domestic product income, at purchasing power parity, of $15,370.

The Republic of China also has an exemplary record of altruistic aid in donations and technical assistance to developing nations. Over the years it has sent over 10,000 experts to train technicians all over the world, especially in Asia, the South Pacific, Latin America and Africa, to help develop their agricultural, fishery and livestock industries. It has also provided over $130 million in disaster relief throughout the world in the past several years and has even contributed indirectly to the United Nations call for aid during the Persian Gulf War and for the relief and rehabilitation of children in Rwanda.

Currently the Republic of China is contributing capital to regional development programmes through institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, the Inter-American Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

From these major indicators, it is clear that the Republic of China has been playing a positive role in the international community, a fact which merits recognition by the United Nations.

4. The international situation has changed fundamentally in the past quarter century, as has the political orientation of the Republic of China

Resolution 2758 (XXVI) was a product of ideological confrontation during the cold war era, when both the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China were claiming to be the sole legal Government of China. The cold war has ended, with constructive dialogue and negotiation having replaced the hostile confrontation of the past.

Following a series of political reforms that have made it a true democracy, the Republic of China today embraces a political philosophy that is totally different from that which it espoused in the years immediately preceding and following its exclusion from the United Nations. It is determined to find a solution to the question of China's division by peaceful means. As to its return to the United Nations, the Government has made it clear that it no longer claims to represent all of China, but that it seeks representation only for its 21.8 million people.

5. Parallel representation in the United Nations by the two sides of a divided nation poses no barrier to unification, indeed, it can be conducive not only to unification but also to regional security and world peace

As a global organization, the United Nations should not ostracize any member of the global village. The cases of the now unified East Germany and West Germany and the still divided South Korea and North Korea serve as precedents for parallel representation of divided nations in the United Nations. The exchanges between the two parts of Germany via the United Nations and other international organizations undoubtedly contributed to their peaceful unification in 1990.

Since their separation half a century ago, the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China have developed under two different systems of political and social values. Until unification is achieved, the Republic of China is entitled to have its own representation in the United Nations. In the meantime, however, the People's Republic of China does not in any way represent the 21.8 million people of the Republic of China.

The geographic location of the Republic of China makes it a focal point of the Asia-Pacific region, so its sense of security and its commitment to cooperation and peace are critical to the stability of the region as a whole.

6. The General Assembly should address the unjust situation created by the adoption of resolution 2758 (XXVI) and restore to the people of the Republic of China their lawful right to participate in the United Nations and all of its activities

The perpetuation of resolution 2758 (XXVI) is the main obstacle barring the Republic of China from the United Nations. It totally ignores the fact that China has been divided into two separate political entities and that each of them exercises jurisdiction over a portion of Chinese territory.

A review by the General Assembly of its resolutions is not without precedent. In 1950, the General Assembly adopted resolution 386 (V) to overturn resolution 39 (I), which had barred Spain's participation in the activities of the United Nations. The revocation in 1991 of resolution 3379 (XXX) is another example.

In the current international situation, the continued exclusion of the Republic of China from the United Nations is archaic, unjust and unwarranted. The resolution that perpetuates this exclusion must be reviewed, with a view to restoring to the 21.8 million people of the Republic of China their right to participate in all the activities of the United Nations.

Annex II

Draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Reviewing its resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 25 October 1971 on the representation of China at the United Nations and noting that, as a result of that resolution, the Republic of China on Taiwan, which represents 21.8 million Chinese people, has been excluded from the United Nations,

Recognizing that, since 1949, China has been divided and that since that time two separate Governments have been exercising jurisdiction over their respective parts of China, that is, mainland China and Taiwan,

Acknowledging that the Republic of China is a responsible member of the international community, with a fully democratic system and a strong, dynamic economy, whose participation in the United Nations would benefit the international community,

Observing that the geographic location of the Republic of China on Taiwan makes its national security vital to the stability of the East Asian and Pacific regions,

Mindful of the fact that, while seeking to participate in the United Nations, the Republic of China continues to espouse hope for the eventual reunification of China,

Affirming the obligation of the global community to recognize and fully respect the fundamental rights of the 21.8 million Chinese people who are under the jurisdiction of the Republic of China,

Noting the declaration of the Government of the Republic of China that it accepts without condition the obligations laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and that it wishes sincerely to contribute to the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security,

Decides to revoke the part of the decisions contained in its resolution 2758 (XXVI) excluding the Republic of China from the United Nations and to allow the Republic of China on Taiwan to participate in the United Nations, thereby restoring to the Government and the people of the Republic of China all their lawful rights at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it.